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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Communications

Electronic Media Services

Washington, DC 20250-1340

Letter No. 2643

December 31, 1993

1994 -- Strong growth in personal income and lower unemployment will absorb much of the large meat supplies expected in 1994. That development will also support both grain and livestock prices. Stronger economic growth internationally will maintain agricultural exports at a steady level. In rural America the natural resource dependent areas will experience continuing pressure about environmental concerns. Retirement areas will experience substantial growth. Manufacturing areas will see mixed results. Persistent poverty and low density regions of rural America will need special attention from USDA and the federal government. USDA and rural leaders will need to create new alliances in 1994 for addressing the needs of rural America. **Contact: Cathy Greene (202) 219-0313.**

INDUSTRIAL USES -- Projected economic growth in 1994 will give a lift to many agricultural producers selling in the industrial sector. The Clinton administration has proposed a rule to assure a 30 percent market share for renewable oxygenates, such as ethanol, in the reformulated gasoline program. Increased use of ethanol would generate more demand for corn and other commodities. The U.S. is currently producing 1 billion gallons of ethanol annually. 400 million bushels of corn, about 5 percent of the annual corn crop, is used in ethanol production. Each 100 million bushels of corn in the oxygenate program boosts farm corn prices 4 to 6 cents per bushels. A 30 percent market share for ethanol in the reformulated gasoline program would significantly increase demand for corn. Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy says the program will improve farm prices, farm income, and create new jobs in rural areas while protecting the environment and increasing national energy security. **Contact: Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623.**

FARM DEBT -- Commercial banks and the farm credit system are reporting strong earnings as their performance reflects the improved financial health of their borrowers. Banks report adequate credit for qualified borrowers. Rural banks in the Midwest appear to be in sound financial condition and are reportedly working with flood victims to develop repayment plans for existing loans. Total farm business debt is forecast to increase slightly during 1994, but the improved quality of most lender loan portfolios suggests that a recurrence of a large volume of problem loans is not likely in the near future. **James Ryan (202) 219-0798.**

SUGAR -- U.S. sugar production in fiscal year 1994 is forecast at 7 million tons, down nearly half a million tons from the record crop in 1993. The downturn is largely due to weather caused lower sugarbeet yields in Minnesota and North Dakota, and a reduced recovery rate. U.S. beet sugar production in 1994 is forecast at nearly 4 million tons, about 54 percent of the total domestic sugar crop. Cane sugar production in fiscal year 1994 is forecast at about the same as last year, 3 million tons, with Florida producing about half of the national cane sugar output. U.S. sugar consumption is expected to be 9 million tons, up nearly 2 percent. Per capita refined sugar consumption is forecast at 65 pounds. **Contact: Peter Buzzanell (202) 219-0886.**

CASH EXPENSES -- Farm cash expenses for 1994 are forecast at \$134 billion, up 2 percent from 1993. One factor in the increase is feed prices, which are rising due to short crops in 1993. Livestock numbers are rising, which will boost feed expenses. Expenses for inputs are forecast up, including interest. **Contact: Linda Farmer (202) 219-0809.**

FOREST FUNDS TO STATES -- One billion dollars was collected during fiscal year 1993 from the sale and use of national forest resources. By law, 25 percent of the revenues collected by USDA's Forest Service are returned to the state where the forest lands are located. Forty-one States and Puerto Rico will receive about \$300 million in national forest receipts. Oregon receives the largest amount, \$129 million. The States are required to use the funds for roads and schools. **Contact: Ann Matejko (202) 205-0929.**

NATIONAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM -- USDA has funded a four-year program designed to provide scholarships and employment to students studying agriculture at historically Black land grant colleges and universities. The \$2.8 million program will provide students with full tuition and employment benefits for each of four years while pursuing a bachelor's degree. Students meeting qualified criteria are selected by USDA. Successful graduates are placed into USDA career positions. **Contact: Linda Oliphant (202) 720-6662.**

CONTROLLING SOIL LOSS -- USDA research confirms the long-term benefits of not plowing under stems and stalks after harvest. New tillage tools allow planting soybeans and grain sorghum directly into such protective layers and the remnants of winter cover crops. At a research station in Ohio a storm of more than six inches of rain in 24 hours did not remove more than 9 pounds of soil from test fields. Farmers are increasingly choosing crop residue management to meet the voluntary soil erosion standards of the 1990 Farm Bill. **Contact: Williams Edwards (614) 545-6349.**

REDUCING ROOT WORMS -- Scientists at the University of Georgia Griffin Experiment Station have found that the southern corn rootworm does more damage in fields where hairy vetch has overwintered as a field cover crop. The spotted cucumber beetle is attracted to hairy vetch and lays its eggs on the plant. The eggs hatch as the southern corn rootworm. When the plant is tilled under, the larvae survive in the soil and are ready to feed on corn seedlings. Studies show that red clover is less attractive to the cucumber beetle, and is even more effective in boosting corn yields. **Contact: David Buntin (404) 542-3824.**

ENVIRONMENTAL REGS CATALOG -- The U.S. government printing office has produced a catalog of official publications that can assist farmers and ranchers to comply with environmental regulations. The catalog lists titles of federal environmental regulations, hazardous chemicals, and solid waste management. The catalog on Environmental Sciences and Methods is available free from the Superintendent of Documents, Mail Stop SM, Washington, D.C. 20402. **Contact: Kathryn McConnell (202) 512-2428.**

DIET AND IMMUNITY -- Findings at a USDA Human Nutrition Research Center indicate that the immune response of older people could be boosted by supplements of glutathione, a common dietary supplement in Japan. Glutathione improved the function of white blood cells, especially T-cells, where most of the age-related loss of immune response occurs. It also dampened production of inflammatory substances. The study showed glutathione had a greater effect on the more sluggish cells from older people, boosting their function close to that of young people's cells. Researchers now plan to test glutathione supplements in a human study. **Contact: Simin Meydani (617) 556-3129.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1908 -- Brenda Curtis talks with a financial planner about the importance of planning your own funeral. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1390 -- The right bird feeder; earning respect; the new 4-H; salmonella broth; therapeutic dairy products. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE FEATURES #1900 -- Lower returns for livestock producers; the new REA; '93 wheat Farmer Owned Reserve; '94 peanut poundage quota; home grown sweetener. (Weekly reel of features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1653 -- Resistant red clover; good news on nematodes; more efficient feed; less is more; grapefruit turn red. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wednesday, January 12, U.S. crop production, grain stocks, rice stocks, winter wheat and rye seedings; Thursday, January 13, world ag production, world grain production, world oilseed production, world cotton production; Friday, January 14, milk production; Monday, January 17 HOLIDAY; Tuesday, January 18, weekly weather and crop situation. **These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.**

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359, COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- Lynn Wyvill reports on biopulping; DeBoria Janifer reviews holly varieties; Will Pemble reports on new research to overcome weeds; Pat O'Leary on computer landscaping; and Dave Luciani of Michigan State Extension on teaching children to be tomorrow's scientists.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- **Agriculture Update** with anchors Eric Parsons and Lori Spiczka. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 4, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

Radio-TV (202) 720-4330	
Radio-TV FAX (202) 690-2165	AgNewsFAX (202) 690-3944

OFFMIKE

A NEW ORGANIZATION...of milk producers, the Kansas Dairy Association, has been formed to strengthen the legislative position of the industry. **Rex Childs** (KFDI, Wichita, KS) is keeping his listeners informed about the group and the actions taken at meetings of other agricultural association meetings. Rex says producers in 1994 will be keeping a close watch on GATT progress in Congress and how the realities of NAFTA develop.

COFFEE SHOP TALK...heard by **Max Stewart** (Sun Radio Network/WIBV, Litchfield, IL) is that the doubling of rates proposed in the corn checkoff referendum is not being received well. Max broadcast live from the St. Louis Farm Show. He says construction at the site required attendees to be a Houdini to find their way in and out.

A GOOD COTTON CROP...has producers looking at equipment, says **Don Sitton** (KPET, Lamesa, TX). Dry weather helped the early cotton harvest. The outlook is for above normal precipitation. Don says that will be a welcome turn of events.

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EQUIPMENT SALES...are expected to get a boost in early '94, says **Lew Middleton** (AgriAmerica Network, Indianapolis, IN). Good crop years have positioned producers to buy. Lew says AgriAmerica is the first state network to distribute its programming using the new KU band digital audio satellite, and in January they are expanding into a new state newswire service. Lew serves as network affiliate manager.

CONGRATULATIONS...to **Tom Rothman** (Minnesota Farm Network, St. Paul), named Communicator of the Year at the recent Minnesota Farm Bureau convention. Tom says producers are urging the state legislature to provide property tax relief. There is concern that many people will leave farming this winter, especially in the southwest sections of the state which were hit by floods. The ground in that area remains saturated, and the 90-day outlook calls for warmer and wetter than normal.

IT'S EQUIPMENT REPAIR SEASON...talk safety to 'em.

VIC POWELL 
Office of Communications

HAPPY NEW YEAR